

# Nebraska Women's Health Plan Executive Summary

New Dimensions of Health for Nebraska Women Project



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Part of the  
Nebraska Women's Health Strategic Plan

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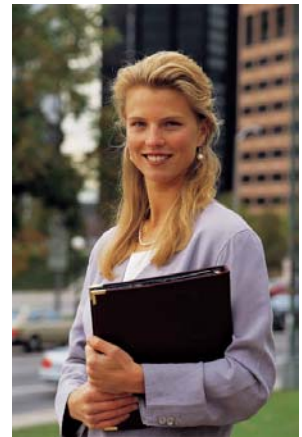
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# Introduction

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The outcome goal of the New Dimensions of Health for Nebraska Women Project is healthier women in Nebraska, in all populations. The Nebraska Women's Health Plan is a comprehensive strategy for achieving that goal. The Nebraska Health and Human Services System (NHHSS) developed the Plan in collaboration with the New Dimensions of Health for Nebraska Women Partnership (New Dimensions Partnership), a volunteer coalition of public and private agencies concerned with women's health. This initiative has been supported by a grant from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration.



## Priority Goals and Issues

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The following Nebraska 2010 Health Goals and Objectives were selected as priorities for Nebraska women's health:

- Access to Quality Health Care
- Education and Community-Based Programs
- Mental Health and Mental Disorders
- Nutrition and Overweight
- Physical Activity and Fitness

There are a number of interconnected issues that get in the way of reaching the goals for Nebraska women's health listed above. The following issues were selected as priorities to be addressed:

- Isolation within the overall health services system
- Inadequate access to culturally and linguistically appropriate health services
- Lack of mutual support systems for women
- Stigma, fear and taboos around certain health issues
- Inadequate funding

## Strategies to Address Priority Health Issues

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NHHSS and the New Dimensions Partnership identified a number of short-term and longer-term strategies to address the priority health issues for Nebraska women. These strategies are summarized below.

## Reduce Isolation within the Overall Health Services System

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Health services in Nebraska generally suffer from “systemic isolation.” Instead of being comprehensive and integrated, services are fragmented and segregated.

- Redefine local/regional health departments as Community Health Departments.
- Develop partnerships among service providers.
- Increase awareness of community resources for women’s health needs.

## Increase Access to Culturally & Linguistically Appropriate Health Services

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The current health system tends to “lock out” or limit access for certain groups because they cannot readily obtain the appropriate services they need. Access to appropriate services can be limited by language, race, ethnicity, culture, gender, age, sexual orientation, and disability status.

- Put services where people live and work that are reflective of the local cultures.
- Increase the number of racial/ethnic minority and rural health care providers.
- Educate providers about the cultural dimensions of health care and encourage the implementation of CLAS standards (Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services).

## Reduce Stigmas, Fears & Taboos

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There are a number of health problems that have historically carried a stigma in our society. There are other health issues for which there are strongly-held, differing viewpoints that in some instances have become so polarizing that civil discussion and debate are often stifled.

- Increase the level of discussion and awareness on women’s health issues affected by stigmas and taboos.
- Encourage and enable providers to address the broad array of women’s health issues more fully.

## Increase Women’s Mutual Support Systems

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Many Nebraska women have indicated the need for more women’s mutual support groups that allow those with similar health issues to connect with and support each other.

- Engage and assist communities to develop and improve mutual support systems for women's health.
- Identify and expand on existing health support systems and models throughout the state.

## Improve Funding

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Inadequate funding is a primary obstacle to meeting our health goals and objectives for women in Nebraska.

- Develop an integrated approach to the use of existing resources.
- Make a case for new resources for women's health.

## Plan Implementation

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Implementation of the Women's Health Plan requires specific actions to carry out the strategies that were identified to address priority issues and help achieve its goals. Partnership members and the NHHSS internal planning group developed a number of action steps. Project staff further refined these steps and established timelines. Many of these action steps address multiple priority issues.

## First Year Action Steps

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- Inventory financial resources and available categorical funding streams of programs within the Nebraska Health and Human Services agency to find common priorities related to the Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services requirements.
- Inventory priority issues of Nebraska Health and Human Services agency programs to determine corresponding goals and priorities. Develop a matrix of opportunities and a coordinated action plan and financial plan.
- Fund three pilot communities to develop integrated, coordinated women's health services that include initiatives to identify and further develop support systems for women, develop best practices and improved service linkages, disseminate women's



- health promotion messages, and develop shared expectations and standards for cultural competence.
- Create a central information source on women's health interpreters and translators (language, vision, and hearing impaired) for all programs to access.
  - Develop a campaign to help women understand how to advocate for high quality health care for themselves.

## Action Steps for Years Two through Five

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- Create and disseminate resources to provide technical assistance and increase communication between the Nebraska Health and Human Services System and local health departments, health care providers, and other organizations providing services to women.
- Develop a comprehensive web-based Community Resource Directory. Disseminate information on the Directory to women throughout the state.
- Organize a state task force to develop a web-based confidential screening tool for health referrals, with links to local resources.
- Increase the availability of support groups for women on various health issues, and expand walking groups for women as a way of providing mutual support.
- Incorporate a wellness program into a living unit at the women's prison and evaluate the program.
- Organize a publicity campaign on women's health issues.

